



California

## Schools To Watch – Taking Center Stage School Self-Rating



School Name : \_\_\_\_\_

### I. ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

**High-performing middle schools offer high quality classes. They challenge all students to use their minds well. All means all.**

Rate your school on each of the elements below. (4 = high level of implementation or high quality; 3 = medium level of implementation or mixed quality; 2 = low level of implementation or low quality; and 1 = not implemented)

(Circle one)











1. All students are expected to meet high academic standards. Teachers supply students with exemplars of high quality work that meet the performance standard. Students revise their work based on feedback until they meet or exceed the performance standard. Students know what high quality work should be like. Expectations are clear. Family conferences focus on standards.	TCS Rec. #s 1; 9	4	3	2	1
2. Curriculum, instruction, and assessment are aligned with high standards. They provide a coherent vision for what students should know and be able to do. The curriculum is rigorous and non-repetitive; it moves forward substantially as students progress through the middle grades. Students, teachers and families understand what students are learning and why. Work is demanding and progresses steadily.	TCS Rec. #s 4; 1	4	3	2	1
3. The curriculum emphasizes deep understanding of important concepts, development of essential skills, and the ability to apply what one has learned to real-world problems. By making connections across the disciplines, the curriculum helps reinforce important concepts. Learning goals push students toward making connections, solving problems, and thinking critically.	TCS Rec. #s 4; 3	4	3	2	1
4. Instructional strategies include a variety of challenging and engaging activities that are clearly related to the concepts and skills being taught. Class activities are interesting to students and directly related to grade-level standards being taught. Students are excited about what they are doing. Students have opportunities to design their own projects. Teachers use many different strategies to reach students.	TCS Rec. #s 3; 6	4	3	2	1
5. Teachers use a variety of methods to assess student performance (e.g., exhibitions, projects, performance tasks) and maintain a collection of student work. Students learn how to assess their own and others' work against the performance standards. Students can explain their work. Students have varied opportunities to demonstrate their learning. They write, give talks, perform their works, and debate each other.	TCS Rec. #s 10; 9	4	3	2	1
6. The school provides students time to meet rigorous academic standards. Flexible scheduling enables students to engage in extended projects, hands-on experiences, and inquiry-based learning. Most class time is devoted to learning and applying knowledge or skills rather than classroom management and discipline. Students can have more time to learn the content, concepts or skills if they need it.	TCS Rec. #s 7; 1	4	3	2	1
7. Students have the supports they need to meet rigorous academic standards. They have multiple opportunities to succeed and extra help as needed. Teachers know what each student has learned and needs yet to learn. Students get extra help as they need it. This may mean help from a tutor, resource teacher, or another student.	TCS Rec. #s 2; 12	4	3	2	1
8. The adults in the school have opportunities to plan, select, and engage in professional development aligned with California's content standards. They have regular opportunities to work with their colleagues to deepen their knowledge and improve their practice. They collaborate in making decisions about rigorous curriculum, standards-based assessment practice, and effective instructional methods, and evaluation of student work. They discuss student work as a means of enhancing their own practice. Teachers observe each other regularly.	TCS Rec. #s 13; 9	4	3	2	1

School Name : \_\_\_\_\_

## II. Developmental Responsiveness

**Respect for Students' Needs and Interests. High-performing middle schools understand students of this age. They know what it is like to be a young adolescent; and they respond readily and well to students' needs and concerns.**

(Circle one)











1. The school creates a personalized environment that supports each student's intellectual, ethical, social, and physical development. The school groups adults and students in small learning communities characterized by stable, close, and mutually respectful relationships. Every student has a mentor, advisory, advocate, or other adult with whom he/she trusts and maintains a long-term relationship.	 TCS Rec. #s 15; 3	4	3	2	1
2. The school provides access to comprehensive services to foster healthy physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development. Students with difficulties can get help; so can their families. School has a wide range of supports – nurses, counselors, resource teachers – to help students and families who need special assistance. Teachers are trained to recognize and handle student problems.	 TCS Rec. #s 16; 2	4	3	2	1
3. Teachers use a wide variety of instructional strategies to foster curiosity, exploration, creativity, and the development of social skills. School actively uses a wide range of technology to ensure that every student learns the standards. Teachers discover what excites students and then use these things to enhance standards-based learning. Teachers foster curiosity and creativity.	 TCS Rec. #s 3; 6	4	3	2	1
4. The curriculum is both socially significant and relevant to the personal interests of young adolescents. Students talk about daily issues in their own lives, their community and their world. Teachers and students often discuss how to use what they are learning to solve real-life problems. In any class and at any time, students can explain why what they are learning is important.	 TCS Rec. #s 1; 5	4	3	2	1
5. Teachers make connections across disciplines to help reinforce important concepts and address real-world problems. Students learn how to use many different subjects to study an issue or problem. Students can work on the same project in several different classes.. For example, they may read a historical novel for Language Arts and History and then study music from the same time period in Music class.	 TCS Rec. #s 3; 1	4	3	2	1
6. The school provides multiple opportunities for students to explore a rich variety of topics and interests in order to develop their identity, discover and demonstrate their own competence, and plan for their future. Students have opportunities to explore and to learn what they are good at. Teachers and counselors push students to challenge themselves and set high goals for the future.	 TCS Rec. #s 3; 5	4	3	2	1
7. Students have opportunities for voice -- posing questions, reflecting on experiences, developing rubrics, and participating in decisions. Students have a real say in what happens at the school. Principal and teachers are always available for students --- the school has an “open-door” policy to encourage student involvement and connection. Students participate in parent-teacher conferences.	 TCS Rec. #s 1; 5	4	3	2	1
8. The school develops alliances with families to enhance and support the well-being of their children. It involves families as partners in their children's education, keeping them informed, involving them in their children's learning, and assuring participation in decision-making. Parents are more than just volunteers or fund-raisers; they are meaningfully involved in all aspects of the school.	 TCS Rec. #s 14; 11	4	3	2	1
9. The school provides students with opportunities to develop citizenship skills, uses the community as a classroom, and engages the community in providing resources and support. Students study their community; learn its history; and study its problems. Students take on projects to to improve the community. The school offers adult education and recreation activities for families.	 TCS Rec. #s 1; 14	4	3	2	1
10. The school provides age-appropriate co-curricular activities. Student co-curricula activities cover a wide range of interests – team sports, clubs, exploratory opportunities, service opportunities, and a rich program in the visual and performing arts. Activities include both boys and girls and students of all skill levels.	 TCS Rec. #s 3; 14	4	3	2	1

School Name : \_\_\_\_\_

### III. Social Equity

**Equal Access to a High Quality Education. All students get high quality teachers and successfully complete challenging classes. If they need extra help to succeed, they get it — as soon as they need it. There are no low-level programs. All students fly first class.**

(Circle one)










1. Faculty and administrators expect high-quality work from all students and are committed to helping each student produce it. School is committed to provide all students (including EL learners and students with disabilities) the very highest quality and most demanding education. Evidence of this commitment includes tutoring, mentoring, special adaptations, and other supports. All students get help as soon as they need it. There are no low-level tracks.	 TCS Rec. #s 12; 11	4	3	2	1
2. Students may use many and varied approaches to achieve and demonstrate competence and mastery of standards. Teachers know about different learning styles. Teaching incorporates the visual and performing arts, computer technology, and creative activities to make learning successful for all students.	 TCS Rec. #s 3; 9	4	3	2	1
3. The school continually adapts curriculum, instruction, assessment, and scheduling to meet its students' diverse and changing needs. The school's schedule and program change to meet students' needs. The school is always seeking ways to improve its programs, curriculum, and assessment to better meet student needs.	 TCS Rec. #s 12; 1	4	3	2	1
4. All students have equal access to valued knowledge in all school classes and activities. All students enroll in challenging classes and take part in high-level learning activities. All students use technology to do research and analyze data, read more than textbooks, and understand how to solve complex problems. Students with disabilities are in regular classrooms that are co-taught by special education professionals.	 TCS Rec. #s 1; 12	4	3	2	1
5. Students have on-going opportunities to learn about and appreciate their own and others' cultures. The school values knowledge from the diverse cultures represented in the school and our nation. Materials in the media center represent all of the cultures of the students. Families often come and share their traditions and beliefs. Teachers use multi-cultural materials and methods. Multiple viewpoints are encouraged.	 TCS Rec. #s 5; 1	4	3	2	1
6. Each child's voice is heard, acknowledged, and respected. The school knows every student well; each student is appreciated and respected. Every student has an adult advocate and supporter in the school. Staff members do not use negative labels or discuss students in negative ways. Staff view the whole student, not just the problem. Teachers make special efforts for students who are shy, quiet or troubled.	 TCS Rec. #s 1; 3	4	3	2	1
7. The school welcomes and encourages the active participation of all its families. The school makes sure that all its families are an integral part of the school. The school has staff who serve as parent organizer to reach out to families. The school provides transportation, meals, childcare and translation support so all families can attend school events.	 TCS Rec. # 14	4	3	2	1
8. The school's reward system demonstrates that it values diversity, civility, service, and democratic citizenship. The school recognizes the contributions of all its students. Awards are not just for sports and academic honors. Students' success and good deeds are always noticed.	 TCS Rec. #s 3; 15	4	3	2	1
9. The faculty is culturally and linguistically diverse. Teachers and staff come from many backgrounds. The staff is a good match to the school's community. School staff understands and supports the family backgrounds and values of its students.	 TCS Rec. #s 5; 14	4	3	2	1
10. The school has rules that are both clear and fair. Students know exactly what will happen to them if they break the rules. The school's suspension rate is low and in proportion to the student population. The school analyzes its suspension data by classroom and makes sure that no one group of students is singled out.	 TCS Rec. #s 15; 11	4	3	2	1

School Name : \_\_\_\_\_

#### IV. Organizational Structure and Processes

**Support for School Improvement. High-performing middle schools are communities where people are learning all the time. They set high standards for themselves and are always trying to improve. That means they take the time to look at how they can be better. Then, they set up the structures and get the resources to make it happen.**

(Circle one)

1. A shared vision of what a high-performing school is and does drives every facet of school change. Shared and sustained leadership propels the school forward and preserves its institutional memory and purpose. Everyone knows what the plan is and the vision is posted everywhere. The shared vision drives constant improvement.	 TCS Rec. #s 3; 2	4	3	2	1
2. Someone in the school has the responsibility and authority to hold the school-improvement enterprise together, including day-to-day know-how, coordination, strategic planning, and communication. Lines of leadership for the school's improvement efforts are clear. The principal and/or Leadership Team have the authority and responsibility to make things happen. Team makes sure that assignments are completed.	 TCS Rec. # 11	4	3	2	1
3. The school is a community of practice in which learning, experimentation, and reflection are the norm. Expectations of continuous improvement permeate the school. The school devotes resources to ensure that teachers have time and opportunity to reflect on their classroom practice and learn from one another. At school everyone's job is to learn.	 TCS Rec. #s 13; 2	4	3	2	1
4. The school devotes resources to content-rich professional development, which is connected to reaching and sustaining the school vision. Professional development is intensive, of high quality, and ongoing. Teachers get high quality help to achieve the school's vision. Opportunities for learning increase knowledge and skills, challenge outmoded beliefs, and provide support in-the-classroom.	 TCS Rec. # 13; 2	4	3	2	1
5. The school is a part of a larger educational system. Articulation assists students to make effective transitions from feeder elementary schools and to destination high schools. The school is not an island unto itself. It draws upon others' experience, research, and wisdom; it enters into relationships such as networks and community partnerships that benefit students' and teachers' development and learning.	 TCS Rec. #s 8; 14	4	3	2	1
6. The school holds itself accountable for its students' success rather than blaming others for its shortcomings. The school collects, analyzes, and uses data as a basis for making decisions. The school grapples with school-generated evaluation data to identify areas for more extensive and intensive improvement. It delineates benchmarks, and insists upon evidence and results. The school intentionally and explicitly reconsiders its vision and practices when data call them into question.	 TCS Rec. #s 11; 10	4	3	2	1
7. Key people possess and cultivate the collective will to persevere and overcome barriers, believing it is their business to produce increased achievement and enhanced development for all students. The school sees barriers as challenges, not problems.	 TCS Rec. #s 11; 14	4	3	2	1
8. The school works with colleges and universities to recruit, prepare, and mentor novice and experienced teachers. It insists on having teachers who promote young adolescents' intellectual, social, emotional, physical, and ethical growth. It recruits a faculty that is culturally and linguistically diverse.	 TCS Rec. #s 13; 14	4	3	2	1
9. The school includes families and community members in setting and supporting the school's trajectory toward high performance. The school informs families and community members about its goals for students and students' responsibility for meeting them. It engages all stakeholders in ongoing and reflective conversation, consensus building, and decision making about governance to promote school improvement	 TCS Rec. #s 14; 11	4	3	2	1